

ENHANCING THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TASK FORCE STAFF

**A MONOGRAPH
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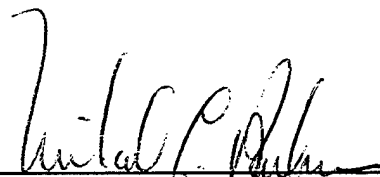
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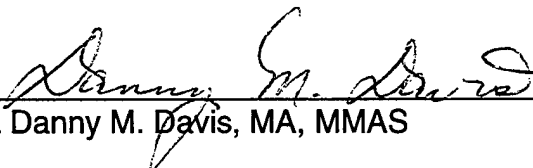
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ABSTRACT

ENHANCING THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TASK FORCE STAFF by Major Thomas P. Reilly, USA, 54 pages.

This monograph examines how the task force commander and executive officer can enhance the training and professional development of the battalion coordinating staff. The National Training Center continues to report that task force staffs continue to demonstrate substandard staff skills. This includes; poor individual staff officer proficiency, inadequate staff section proficiency, and

This study relies heavily on contemporary training experiences. Observations from the National Training Center Take Home Packages and various products available through the Center for Army Lesson Learned. Additionally, supporting ideas and observations are also available in many contemporary military journals.

The initial portions of this monograph were developed from two primary studies. Beginning in 1963 Doctor J. A. Olmstead began a thirty year study on the subject of *Battle Staff Integration*. The fruits of his labors was published in 1992 by the Institute for Defense Analysis. The RAND Corporation published a study of *Battalion Level Command and Control at the National Training Center* in 1994.

The section dealing with the basic components of learning organizations was drawn primarily from Peter Senge's work *The Fifth Discipline*. His ideas are one of the hot topics in the contemporary business world and additional insights were found in many business journals. *The Harvard Business Review* has published numerous articles covering the various aspects of the learning organization.

This monograph concludes that the current training doctrine is sufficient for training and professionally developing the task force coordinating staff. Peter Senge's concept of the learning organization and his five learning disciplines do provide insight into the training process and can be used to reinforce current training doctrine. His development of the seven fundamental learning disabilities provides valuable insight into why organizations fail to learn. They are useful for assisting in the assessment of the effectiveness of task force staff training and operations.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Training is the Army's top priority; it prepares us to fight. As leaders, our sacred responsibility is to ensure that no soldier ever dies in combat because that soldier was not properly trained.¹

FM 25-101

As Dueler Six continued to intently study the map in front of him his thoughts began to drift . . . he stood on the eastern tip of the Whale looking out over the scattered remains of his task force. Two days earlier the Task Force Cowboy had received the first mission of their rotation; conduct a deliberate attack against a defending motorized rifle company in order to facilitate the passage of follow on forces. The initial action during the mission focused on the scout platoon conducting an area reconnaissance in order to gain a comprehensive picture of the enemy's disposition and composition. The scout platoon initially moved smoothly across the rough desert terrain, but were soon stopped by a complex obstacle system in their path. Initially, the scout platoon leader was momentarily stunned by the obstacle system because the task force intelligence officer had templated the likely obstacle further to the east and had not considered other possible locations during his analysis of the enemy for this mission.

As the scouts began their reconnaissance of the obstacle system they began to suffer losses from the over-watching elements of the Krasnovian motorized rifle company and the task force mission began to falter. The scout platoon leader was unable to coordinate indirect fire support because in an effort to win the "reconnaissance battle" the task force S2, not the S3, had ordered the area reconnaissance and failed to coordinate the necessary support for this tactical task. Additionally, the scout platoon sergeant found it impossible to evacuate his casualties because combat service support for the scout platoon had also been overlooked.

By this time Dueler Six began the movement of the task force towards the objective. He had a clear picture of the obstacle system facing him, but he knew little about the motorized rifle company defending somewhere to the east. His lead company/team approached the breach site marked by the scout platoon and began to establish an over-watch position. They immediately began to receive accurate direct and indirect fires. As the remainder of the task force moved into position for supporting the task force deliberate breach, they were in turn engaged by elements of the defending motorized rifle company. As losses began to mount a coordinated enemy air and chemical strike paralyzed the task force within the fire sack of the motorized rifle company. The task force commander realized he no longer possessed the necessary combat power to accomplish his mission and began the difficult and painful task of disengaging from the fire sack and retiring back to the west.²

While the opening scene in this vignette is fictional, it is not unique. "The most frequent problem occurs in the planning process, that is, the ability of the task force commander and his staff to generate adequate plans."³ Success at the task force level can be linked to three related areas; the proficiency of individual task force staff officers, the proficiency of the task force staff sections, and the ability of the executive officer to synchronize the efforts of the entire task force staff. "The effective functioning of battle staffs in the highly emergent situations of the modern battlefield requires at least the following; role-specific individual skills, team performance skills, and integration."⁴ These three areas have historically been an important ingredient necessary for battlefield success. Without properly planned and prepared tactical actions, units frequently fail to accomplish their assigned missions.

The United States Army does a poor job of planning and preparing task force level operations during simulated ground combat operations at the National Training Center. In his 1992 study, *Battle Staff Integration*, J.A. Olmstead identified five general pitfalls that confront all task force staffs:⁵

1. Failure to sense changes in the environment and/or incorrectly interpreting what is happening.
2. Failure to communicate all relevant information to those parts of the organization which can act upon it or use it.
3. Failure of the battle staff to insure that all personnel and subordinate units make the changes indicated by new information or changed plans.
4. Failure to consider the impact of changes upon all parts of the unit.
5. Failure to obtain information about the effects of the change.

For Army units the National Training Center is arguably the most realistic and intense training simulation available. Because of this challenging training environment the Army has studied the problems and effects associated with planning and preparing task force level combat operations and many times believed that solutions to the problems had been found, however, rotational units continue to demonstrate the same negative trends from rotation to rotation.

Current thinking on tactical operations says that 50% of a successful operation comes from the planning and preparation phases and 50% comes from execution. If this "division" of success is accepted then the proficiency of the task force staff is critical to the overall success of the task force. Olmstead's five general staff pitfalls then provide valuable insight into why these recurring negative trends continue to hamper the likelihood of success for rotational task force's at the NTC.

This monograph examines staff operations at the task force level. It is designed to examine the training and development of the task force staff from three related aspects. First, it will examine how to enhance the training and professional development of the individual task force staff officers. Second, it will examine how to enhance the training and development of selected task force staff sections, and finally, it will explore the issue of task force staff synchronization.

This study considers its subject in eight sections. Section II examines the issue in detail and outlines the areas selected for study. This includes an analysis of Take Home Packages (THP) from the National Training Center (NTC) obtained from the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) database. This also includes the results of the review of

CALL bulletins and products covering the study sample. Section III reviews current US Army training doctrine. It will briefly provide an overview of training doctrine and identify the nine principles of training.

Section IV introduces the ideas contained in Peter Senge's concept of the learning organization. This section will examine the concept of the learning organization and its potential application at the task force level. It will also identify and define the five disciplines of learning organizations and examine their application at the task force level. Finally, it will identify, define, and relate Senge's seven fundamental learning disabilities to the training of the task force staff.

Section V explores the issues associated with the individual task force coordinating staff officers. This section will briefly review the primary responsibilities of each task force coordinating staff officer and then identify systemic negative trends derived from analysis of the NTC THP's and the CALL bulletins and products. The purpose is to isolate the causes associated with the identified negative trends and then examine ways to correct them. This section will then examine methods available to correct these negative trends. It will accomplish this by highlighting the appropriate principles of training found in current U.S. Army training doctrine and associated principles of the learning organization.

Section VI examines the issues concerning the task force coordinating staff sections. This section will briefly review the primary responsibilities of each task force coordinating staff section. It will then identify systemic negative trends developed from analysis of the NTC THP's and the CALL bulletins and products. The purpose is to

isolate these trends and their causes so an examination can then be made. This section also explores ways to correct these deficiencies using the training doctrine contained in FM 25-100 and FM 25-101 and the associated principles of learning organizations.

Section VII explores the issue of task force staff synchronization. This section will identify the continuing negative trends associated with task force staff synchronization. These trends were developed through the analysis of NTC THP's and CALL bulletins and products. The purpose is to isolate the causes associated with the negative trends and to examine ways to correct them. Finally, this section will use the staff organization and operations doctrine found in FM 101-5 and the training doctrine in FM 25-100 and FM 25-101, along with the principles of the learning organization to explore possible solutions to the problems of task force staff synchronization.

The final section offers some general conclusions based on the information contained in the earlier sections. It reviews the foundations of training that exists in our current training doctrine. Finally, it reviews the ideas contained in Peter Senge's concept of the learning organization. This final section also highlights the destructive nature of his seven fundamental learning disabilities and how they affect all organizational structures.

II. THE ISSUE

Plans are inadequate because the task force staffs do not function well as a group. Because the staffs are ineffective, the task force commander and S3 generate most of the plan, which, without staff input, tends not to give full consideration to all information and battlefield operating systems.⁶

Battle Staff Integration

As Dueler Six moved to a vantage point on the eastern tip of the WHALE he could see the results of the morning's battle. 20 of his 30 M1A1s and 18 of his 28 M2A2s sat "burning" in the enemy fire sack. His scout platoon was down to 3 operational vehicles. The task force never reached the designated breach site, let

alone its assigned objective. As he continued to observe the results of the battle he began to reflect back on the sequence of events leading up to the beginning of the battle in an effort to understand what had gone wrong.

METHODOLOGY

The National Training Center was designed to train combat arms battalions and their leaders on the complex and demanding tactical tasks that closely replicates the realities of modern combat. Since its inception in the early 1980's, the National Training Center and its Opposing Force (OPFOR) have defeated many rotational units. Due to the intensity of the simulated combat at the National Training Center numerous doctrinal, organizational, and material studies have been conducted on relevant warfighting issues. Therefore, this monograph will use THP's from rotational units that have fought at the NTC as the study sample.

To assess the problems associated with these three areas of training and staff development, the author surveyed four rotations at the NTC. These rotations occurred during the 1st and 2nd Quarters of Fiscal Year 1997. The four rotations resulted in the study of three armor and three mechanized infantry battalions, and two cavalry squadrons. These four rotations provided the author with a total of sixty two missions for analysis. Additionally, several research projects focused on the overarching issue of task force battle command were also surveyed. The two primary studies were; the 1994 RAND Corporation Study by Jon Grossman, *Battalion-Level Command and Control at the National Training Center* and J.A. Olmstead's 1992 study, *Battle Staff Integration*, published by the Institute For Defense Analyses. Finally, numerous research products and

bulletins produced by CALL at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas were used in the research for this monograph.

Careful consideration is a prerequisite to using information contained in the NTC THP's.⁷ THP's are divided into several sections that proved useful for analysis. The outline of a typical THP is; a review of the brigade mission, commanders intent , and OPFOR mission. Next a review of the task force mission, commanders intent, and concept of the operation concludes the introductory portion of the THP. This is followed by a battle summary and then a series of sections that record the observations of the observer/controllers. Recorded observations from the observer/controllers provided the body of the information analyzed for this monograph. Within the three general areas of plan, prepare, and execute; observations concerning the mission under review are subdivided into two additional areas; sustain and improve. Additionally, the THP's provide a review, based on recorded observer/controller observations, that cover the seven battlefield operating systems. Finally, there is a difference between the THP's prepared by the different observer/controller teams. The THP's prepared by the armor team focus more on the battlefield operating systems and less on the subordinate elements of the task force. The THP's prepared by the infantry observer/controller team provide more detailed information on the task force subordinate elements and less on the battlefield operating systems within the task force.

SCOPE

For purposes of defining the overall scope of this monograph, this study will explore the trends associated with the task force coordinating staff; S1 (adjutant), S2

(intelligence), S3 (operations and training), S4 (logistics), and the task force maintenance officer (BMO) officers and their respective staff sections. It will also examine the issue of synchronizing the activities of the entire task force staff. As part of the effort to narrow the focus of the study, the author limited his analysis to three interrelated areas of; individual task force staff officer, task force staff sections, and task force staff synchronization. In assessing these three areas the author further limited his analysis to the planning and preparation phases for each mission studied.

ANALYSIS

Analysis of 1st and 2nd Quarter, Fiscal Year 1997 trends from the NTC indicate that task force staffs continue to demonstrate negative trends in training and professional development in three interrelated areas. First, task force staff officers frequently demonstrate inadequate proficiency in their specific areas of responsibility.⁸ Second, task force staff sections continue to demonstrate an inability to perform their doctrinally dictated missions in support of the overall task force effort⁹, and finally, analysis of the overall command and control battlefield operating system shows that the activities and actions of these same task force staff sections are frequently not coordinated.¹⁰ The net result of these three negative trends is that task force's continue to perform poorly throughout their rotation at the National Training Center because of poor planning and preparation.

Analysis of these NTC THP's shows that task force staff officers are frequently demonstrating inadequate expertise within their specific areas of responsibility. A common trend among the various staff officers is the failure to understand and apply the

troop leading procedures throughout the entire mission.¹¹ Numerous trends also indicate that the various task force coordinating staff officers are unable to perform the basic tasks required of their duty position. This impacts negatively on the overall ability of the task force staff to perform its primary mission of “providing direction to subordinate elements and coordinating the overall actions of the task force.”¹²

NTC trends also point to the continuing problem of task force staff sections frequently demonstrating inadequate understanding and competence in the tasks their sections are required to perform in support of the overall task force effort. The most common trend is primary staff officers frequently performing many of the sub-tasks associated with his particular staff section because he has failed to train the members of his section. Specific observations include; intelligence staff sections do not understand the process of developing the various products they are responsible for in support of the task force decision making process,¹³ operations staff sections do not understand course of action development and war-gaming¹⁴ and the inability of the Combat Trains Combat Post (CTCP) to conduct or continue the planning process without the direct supervision of the task force S1 or S4.¹⁵ These brief examples demonstrate the noted weakness in the overall task force command and control battlefield operating system. Since the task force staff sections in this study were frequently unable to perform their assigned responsibilities they are failing to “assist the commander in doing all those things necessary to coordinate the battle and to ensure adequate combat and combat service support to allow for continuous operations.”¹⁶

Compounding these two previous deficiencies is the continuing trend associated with the failure of the task force executive officer to coordinate the actions of the entire task force staff. NTC observations provide two examples. First, mission analysis is often a disjointed process.¹⁷ After receiving initial guidance from the commander the various staff sections return to their work areas and independently perform mission analysis. The results of these individual efforts at mission analysis are then briefed to the commander. This process frequently leads to the oversight of critical information and presents the commander with a series of unrelated and uncoordinated briefings. Second, task force staffs often develop courses of action without integrating all elements available for the operation.¹⁸ Specifically, combat support and combat service support operations are ignored until the war-gaming phase of decision making. This then degrades or stops decision making during war-gaming when these deficiencies become obvious. These two examples provide some initial insight into how and why task force staffs are unable to effectively synchronize "the activities on the battlefield to produce the desired result."¹⁹ It also demonstrates how and why elements of the task force are unsupported during critical phases of the operation and highlights the failure of the entire battalion battle staff to develop a coordinated plan.

IV. TRAINING THE FORCE

"The key to fighting and winning is an understanding of how we train to fight at every echelon. Training programs must result in demonstrated tactical and technical competence, confidence, and initiative in our soldiers and their leaders."²⁰

FM 25-100

Dueler Six reflected back on the task force training program prior to their departure for the NTC. The training program had really begun in earnest almost six months earlier with the first task force command post exercise. This was quickly followed by the platoon external evaluations and company/team lane

training. After a brief maintenance period, the task force occupied the multi-purpose range complex and conducted a gunnery exercise. During this period the task force had qualified all 58 of their M1A1 main battle tanks and all twelve tank platoons. The training period ended with a brigade level command post exercise supported by the JANUS simulation system. Overall, Dueler Six was satisfied with the level of training proficiency they that had achieved and the discipline demonstrated by the entire task force.

In November, 1988 the U.S. Army published its updated training philosophy in Field Manual 25-100, *Training The Force*. This manual focuses on the overarching principles of U.S. Army training doctrine. It established the case for conducting challenging training, against a known standard. This was followed in September, 1990 with the publication of Field Manual 25-101, *Battle Focused Training*. This manual focuses on training at the battalion level and below. It includes collective and individual training and also provides a section on planning training for these levels. Together these two manuals provide the foundation for U.S. Army training doctrine, to “train the way we intend to fight because our historical experiences amply show the direct correlation between realistic training and success on the battlefield.”²¹

The fundamental components U.S. Army training doctrine is found in the first few pages of both of these manuals. These components are a set of nine training principles designed to guide the planning, preparation, and execution of training at all levels. The nine principles of training are; train as combined arms and services teams, train as you fight, use appropriate doctrine, use performance-oriented training, train to challenge, train to sustain proficiency, train using multi-echelon techniques, and make commanders the primary trainers.

IV. THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION

"A learning organization is a place where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn."²²

The Fifth Discipline

Dueler Six sat in his chair looking at the information displayed on the canvas walls around him. The staff had done a satisfactory job of sifting through and analyzing the information before presenting it to him during the briefing. Instinctively, he knew there were holes in the information arrayed before him and that the only way to fill those information voids was to force his opponent to provide him with the missing pieces. He also knew this meant exposing an element of his own organization. He was facing a battle hardened competitor occupying a strong position on ground of his opponents choosing. Once he put his task force into motion events would unfold rapidly.

This fictional "environment of conflict" could easily be describing the "moment of truth" facing either our fictional task force commander or a contemporary business executive. Both face environments of conflict consisting of mandatory fast paced decision making and operations, a lack of complete information, and an unforgiving environment which richly rewards the winners and brutally punishes the losers. The one fundamental difference between a task force and a contemporary business venture is the commodity being risked. The task force risks the very lives of its members during every operation, while the business is only risking its profit margin.

To overcome the difficulties of competing and winning within this environment of conflict, Peter Senge argues that organizations must be able to learn in order to survive and be successful. His concept of the learning organization is the vehicle which he believes will enable organizations to successfully compete and win.

Senge argues that for any organization to thrive they must become a learning organization. A learning organization is “an organization where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning together.”²³

In the context of *The Fifth Discipline*, learning is defined as; “continually enhancing the capacity of the organization to realize its highest aspirations.”²⁴ This definition sets the stage for understanding the five individual disciplines and why their integration becomes the key to success. The heart of the learning organization is based on five learning disciplines; personal mastery, shared vision, mental models, team learning, and systems thinking. The first four learning disciplines are Senge’s core disciplines. Systems thinking is the final discipline which Senge describes as the “cement” which holds the entire concept together. Although these five learning disciplines develop separately, each one is critical to the success of the others and provides a critical link in building a learning organization.

The first core discipline is personal mastery. Personal mastery is learning to expand our personal capacity to create the results we most desire and creating an organizational environment which encourages all of its members to develop themselves toward the goals and purposes they choose. Personal mastery in a learning organization refers to each individual developing, enhancing, and sustaining a high level of proficiency in their assigned area of expertise.²⁵

The basis for this core discipline is the idea of personal vision. "The ability to focus on ultimate intrinsic desires, not only on secondary goals, is a cornerstone of personal mastery."²⁶ Personal vision therefore comes from within the individual and must focus on the positive aspects of life. This concept includes both the personal and professional elements of the individuals life.

The primary obstacle to developing personal mastery is our inability to over come "negative visions." Negative visions inhibit our ability to achieve our goals because they are usually a means to an end, they are not tied directly to our purpose. "They are a byproduct of a lifetime of fitting in, of coping, of problem solving."²⁷

The role of the task force leadership is to encourage and assist subordinates in the development of their personal vision. This is critical in the short term because it is a necessary step in developing and sustaining shared vision. It is critical in the long run because it enhances the capabilities and viability of the organization. Personal mastery also becomes a potentially powerful part of the solution to this problem of enhancing the training and development of the individual task force staff officers.

Shared visions emerge from personal visions.²⁸ The concept of shared vision is the process of building a sense of commitment in a group, by developing shared images of the future the group seeks to create, and the principles and guiding practices by which the group hopes to get there.²⁹ This concept consists of two diametrically opposed ideas; genuine vision and the vision statement.

A genuine shared vision empowers the members of the organization to learn and excel. It is built around the idea of a shared goal which all members of the organization

want to achieve. Shared vision “creates a common identity”³⁰ throughout the organization. The common trap many organizational leaders fall into is the concept of the now familiar vision statement. The fundamental difference between a shared vision and a vision statement is that the latter usually fails to galvanize the organization. It usually consists simply of the leaders vision for the organization. It is not developed from a personal vision and therefore lacks the energy and commitment necessary to inspire the entire organization.

The task force commander is the critical player in the development of the organizations shared vision. Through the development of his own personal vision, understanding of the organization, and ability to galvanize the individual members of the entire organization, he is able to develop and sustain an honest shared vision.

The process of mental modeling enables an individual and an organization to surface, clarify, test, and improve the internal representations of the world. They also enable individuals and organizations to understand how these representations, along with their accompanying implicit assumptions, shape decisions and actions.³¹ Mental models determine not only how we make sense of the world, but how we take action. They are inhibitors as well as accelerators.

Mental models can be powerful obstacles to organizational effectiveness or they can be used to accelerate learning and thereby improve the effectiveness of the organization. As obstacles, mental models are powerful because they shape the perceptions of both individuals and organizations. Mental models as also useful as accelerators to the learning process. By using models developed by the organization that

enables it to “see” into the future, the organization is able to foresee what new skills and organizational innovations might be necessary.³²

The discipline of team learning is centered on the “capacity of the members of the team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine atmosphere of learning together.”³³ In team learning various individuals come together with a common vision and work towards a common purpose. This results in an exponential increase in the ability of the group to solve problems and offer solutions far better and faster than the individuals who comprise the group. This discipline is the difference between good organizations and great organizations.

Within organizations, team learning has three critical dimensions. First, there is the need to think insightfully about complex issues. Second, there is a need for innovative, coordinated action. Third, there is the role of team members on other teams.³⁴ These three critical dimensions also provide a concise description of the staff processes present in Army units. Given the nature of today’s complex adaptive systems, the need to develop and sustain team learning has never been greater.

Systems thinking is the integrating discipline for the four core disciplines. It is the cornerstone discipline that enables the organization to “see wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to seeing them as active participants in shaping reality.”³⁵ The task force leadership is directly responsible for ensuring the concept of systems thinking is at work throughout the entire organization. Systems thinking becomes the bedrock for building a foundation for enhancing the training and development of the task force staff.

System thinking is a way of thinking about and a language for describing and understanding the forces and relationships that shape the behavior of systems. This discipline helps us to see how to change system more effectively and to act more in tune with the larger processes of the natural and economic world.³⁶ It is simply understanding the connections and relationships that shape the behavior of the system in which we exist.

Understanding system thinking is critical if the task force is going to leverage the concepts of the learning organization. Systems thinking is the discipline that integrates the four core disciplines, fusing them into a coherent body of theory and practice. Without a systematic orientation there is no motivation to look at how the disciplines interrelate. Systems thinking is the process through which we enhance the other four disciplines “and reminds us that the whole can exceed the sum of it s parts.”³⁷

The heart of systems thinking is that the individuals who make up the organization develop a new way to see themselves and their world. The critical component is for the individuals inside the organization to see how they are connected to their world. It is a fundamental shift of mind in which the individuals go from seeing themselves “as separate from the world to connected to the world, from seeing problems as caused by someone or something out there to seeing how our own actions create the problems we experience.”³⁸ Fundamentally, it is coming to the realization that they are part of a complex adaptive system in which all components are continually interacting upon and with each other.

In summary, Senge’s five disciplines of the learning organization provide a reference point for understanding the relationships of individuals and teams inside

various organizational structures. They also help to develop an understanding of organizational structures and functions.

One of the most common failures in any organization is the inability of the leaders to recognize impending threats the organization faces, understanding the implications of those threats, or from developing alternatives to effectively deal with those threats. Senge refers to these common failures as learning disabilities. These learning disabilities are present in every organizational structure and they effect how the individuals, sections, and the entire organization think and act.

In *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge, describes seven fundamental learning disabilities that exist inside all organizational structures; I am my position, the enemy is out there, the illusion of taking charge, the fixation on events, the parable of the boiling frog, the delusion of learning from experience, and the myth of the management team. "It is no accident that most organizations learn poorly. The way they are designed and managed, the way people's jobs are defined, and, most importantly, the way we have all been taught to think and act creates fundamental learning disabilities."³⁹ Understanding these seven learning disabilities enables the organization to "see" itself as it really is and to move down the road to becoming a learning organization.

"I am my position"⁴⁰ describes how most people view themselves as simply the task they perform inside the organization. They fail to see themselves as part of the overall effort or purpose of the organization. "Each individual tries to optimize his performance in the system while failing to understand the necessity to integrate into the system."⁴¹ This occurs on the task force staff when the individual staff officers view their

primary function as operating inside their respective specialty. The alternative is for the staff officers to view their primary function as integrating their expertise into the overall task force effort. "When people in organizations focus only on their position, they have little sense of responsibility for the results produced when all positions interact."⁴²

The second learning disability in contemporary task forces is "the enemy is out there."⁴³ As elements of the task force support platoon arrived back in the combat trains assembly area laager the support platoon leader informs the task force S4 that he was unable to pick-up the requisitioned ammunition. The ammunition was not available in the brigade support area. The S4 quickly reported this to the task force executive officer with the qualifier that "those people in the brigade support area" have once again failed to provide the required support to the task force. The S4 has fallen victim to this disability by assuming those responsible for ammunition resupply in the brigade support area are purposely working against him.

The "illusion of taking charge"⁴⁴ is the third learning disability which can effect the operation of individual staff sections and the synchronization of the entire staff. This is not an uncommon occurrence in the task force tactical operations center. As the NTC rotation began the S3 had his assistants produce the course of action sketches for the briefings. As the rotation continued the S3 began to produce the course of action sketches himself. He believed he was better qualified and possessed a better understanding of the process than his subordinates. This resulted in his subordinates watching the S3 do work they previously were responsible for. The tasks that actually required the expertise of the S3 went undone during this time. Therefore, the entire process took longer than it would

have had the S3 only permitted his subordinates to perform their assigned duties. Tasks the S3 had previously trained his assistants to accomplish.

The fourth learning disability, “the fixation on events,”⁴⁵ is a frequent visitor to the task force staff. This disability occurs when the commander and staff become focused on the daily activities and “periods of crisis” that demand their immediate and undivided attention. Over time they begin to lose sight of their overall purpose. Consider the issue of daily maintenance operations at the NTC. Missing daily preventive maintenance checks and services (PMCS) on day one of the rotation is hardly catastrophic. However, by day five the cumulative effect of missed PMCS begins to erode the combat power of the task force. Senge believes that the irony in this disability is that “the primary threats to our survival, both of our organizations and of our societies, come not from sudden events but from slow gradual processes.”⁴⁶

The inability of the task force to adapt to the gradually building threats to its survival is known as the “parable of the boiling frog.”⁴⁷ This learning disability was evident throughout the analysis of the NTC THP’s. To continue with the maintenance example; by day ten of the rotation the task force is only able to muster 70% of its available combat systems for battle. This slow, gradual degradation of its combat power is now preventing the task force from “surviving” on the NTC battlefield. To further complicate the matter, in four days the task force will begin the process of turning in the equipment borrowed from the NTC motor pool. The failure of the maintenance system will continue to plague the task force until it departs for home station.

The “the delusion of learning from experience”⁴⁸ is the core learning dilemma that confronts all organizations. Consider the basic nature of war-gaming. Members of the task force staff become “opponents” during this phase of analysis in an effort to gain insights into critical events anticipated for the upcoming battle. The results of this adversarial process help to define the actions of the task force at a future place in time and space. When this action occurs it may or may not take place as the task force staff imagined it during the planning phase of the operation. Additionally, most of the staff members involved in the planning process will not directly experience the results of their decision. They may learn about the event during the after action review, if it is in fact a significant event, otherwise they will only learn indirectly about the action and how their decisions helped shape the event. “We learn best from experience but we never directly experience the consequences of many of our important decisions.”⁴⁹

The “myth of the management team”⁵⁰ in the task force is frequently observed during the war-gaming phase of decision making. During the initial phase of the war-gaming session the S2 is “opposing” the task force with an uncooperative enemy. As the session continues the S3 and S2 begin to disagree over the actions and reactions the S2 is portraying for the OPFOR because they do not conform to the S3’s preconceived ideas. By the end of the war-gaming session, in frustration, the S2 is portraying a “cooperative” enemy. In the view of the S3 it was a successful war-gaming session. The task force was successful during the analysis of the critical event. The S2 views the outcome differently. By portraying a cooperative enemy he believes the task force is being set up for defeat.

but as the disagreement with the S3 became heated he “gave in” to avoid professional embarrassment and helped “sow the seeds of defeat.”

In summary, Senge’s seven fundamental learning disabilities provide valuable insight into why organizations and their members fail and thereby bring about the eventual demise of the organization.

Senge’s concept of the learning organization lays the foundation for a true alternative to the authoritarian hierarchy of organizational structures. His five learning disciplines provide a solid base for developing and enhancing any organizational structure. His seven fundamental learning disabilities provides a reference point for understanding the reasons why organizations perform poorly and ultimately fail.

V. INDIVIDUAL TASK FORCE STAFF OFFICERS

“The skills required to perform those activities specific to their respective battle staff roles and which are performed independently of other team members.”⁵¹

Battle Staff Integration

As Dueler Six watched M88 recovery vehicles move forward he began to consider what had gone wrong. The initial planning effort had not gone as well as it had during recent command post exercises back at home station. There had been a sense of confusion and uncertainty he had not witnessed since their first command post exercise more than six months earlier. As he recalled the events of the past 36 hours he began to recognize some of the shortcomings in his individual staff officers. This reflection led him to an understanding of one of the contributing causes that led to their recent defeat.

The proficiency of the individual task force staff officers is the first of these three related areas. “The members of the coordinating staff are the principal staff assistants to the commander. They are responsible for assisting the commander during combat operations by providing him necessary information, recommendations, and ensuring the proficiency of their individual staff sections.”⁵²

As Dueler Six watched the frenzied activity on the desert floor and listened to the radio calls on the task force administrative/logistics (A&L) net, he began to realize that the number of casualties the task force had sustained was climbing.

The task force S1 was an intelligent, energetic graduate of the armor officer advance course who had been serving as the task force adjutant for the past nine months. The S1 is the principal staff officer with responsibility for "exercising staff functions and coordination for personnel service support. This encompasses the areas of personnel service, administrative services, health service support, finance support, postal services, chaplain activities, legal service support, morale and welfare support activities, and public affairs. The S1 is also the assistant officer in charge of the combat trains command post"⁵³

Dueler Six began to notice the holes in the task force casualty evacuation plan. He remembered that the task force S1 had planned to keep the majority of the medical assets consolidated in an effort to control their deployment to the critical place on the battlefield. He realized that this casualty evacuation plan; did not support the task force mission, failed to maximize the use of task force evacuation and health services assets, and was obviously not minimizing battlefield casualties. The task force S1 had the primary staff responsibility for medical planning⁵⁴ and his failure to develop an effective casualty evacuation plan was going to increase the number of casualties Task Force Cowboy sustained primarily because of a relatively high number of "casualties" due to a high died of wounds rate.

As Dueler Six continued to listen to the efforts of the task force to restore order to the aftermath of the battle, he noted the inability of the combat trains command post to conduct an emergency resupply of fuel and ammunition to the remaining elements of the task force.

Recalling the combat service support plan for the mission, Dueler Six knew that the needed fuel and ammunition was available in the combat trains, but confusion as to its location, composition, and requested delivery location was jamming the net with confused radio transmissions. As Dueler Six continued to monitor the radio calls he noticed that the task force S1 was the primary operator on the administrative/logistics net. As the assistant commander of the combat trains command post, the S1 was frequently called upon to act in the place of the S4.⁵⁵ However, the S1 seemed unable to sort through the problem and conduct the emergency resupply of fuel and ammunition. If this situation continued the apparent inability of the S1 to function as the task force S4 would be directly responsible for the continuing inadequate logistical support of Task Force Cowboy. Since the combat trains command post is the focal point of combat service support for the task force⁵⁶ it was critical to their overall success for the S1 to function effectively as the S4.

As Dueler Six pulled out his notepad and begin to make notes concerning the casualty evacuation plan he heard the tasks force executive officer (XO) enter the A&L net and begin to restore order by tackling the immediate tasks at hand. His thoughts returned to their initial planning sessions back at Fort Irwin Military City. He returned his attention to his notepad and made two additional entries; battlefield visualization and templating Both of these notations concerned their unsuccessful attempt at applying the intelligence preparation of the battlefield process in relation to the overall task force planning process. Dueler Six also noted a lack of appreciation by the company/team commanders for what the IPB process can add to the task force effort.

The task force S2 was a hard charging, senior captain who had been serving as his task force intelligence officer for the past nine months. He is responsible for "combat intelligence. He coordinates input from other staff officers, prepares and updates the intelligence preparation of the battlefield, and monitors reconnaissance and surveillance

plans in conjunction with the S3. The S2 provides staff supervision over supporting intelligence organizations and requests additional support from brigade to support the commander's intelligence requirements."⁵⁷

Dueler Six's first note, battlefield visualization, went under the section set aside for the S2 and intelligence operations. The task force S2 possessed a clear understanding of enemy doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures. His weakness lay in his inability to correlate the three functions of "seeing the enemy," seeing the terrain," and "seeing themselves."⁵⁸ For the task force to be successful they had to be able to "visualize" the enemy on the terrain over which the task force was operating. This meant applying enemy doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures to the terrain and then "painting a picture" of the enemy.

Dueler Six's second note, templating, also went under the section set aside for the S2. The S2 had convinced the task force executive officer that the enemy had only one course of action available to him. The result of this decision was that they had considered only one possible enemy course of action during their planning process. While this streamlined the planning process it also resulted in confusion when the enemy chose a different course of action than the one they developed. By developing only one enemy course of action and then not using information and intelligence to refine it, the task force faced an enemy course of action it is not expecting.

Dueler Six pulled out a cigar out of his pocket, stuck the unlit stogie into the corner of his mouth continued to reflect on their initial planning efforts. He quickly remembered the confusion the S3 had shown during their initial efforts at course of action development. His eyes returned to his notepad and the entry. course of action development, was made under the section set aside for the S3.

The task force S3 was an energetic, aggressive graduate of the Army's Command and General Staff College and had been serving as the task force operations officer for the past ten months. The S3 is responsible for "planning, organizing the force and coordinating combat operations of the battalion. He coordinates with other staff officers and planners. The S3 is responsible for integrating all available combat, combat support, and combat service support into battalion operations."⁵⁹

Dueler Six recalled the initial confusion of the S3 as he began the course of action development process. The initial confusion centered on the inability of the S3 to decide where to begin course of action development. As he continued to recall this sequence of events he also realized their courses of action were not based on his decisive points and they did not address details for actions on contact, actions on the objective, nor continuous reconnaissance. The failure of his S3 to understand this basic component of the military decision making process would continue to jeopardize future operations for the entire task force. An insufficiently developed course of action begins a cascading effect that often leads to the defeat of the task force due to the subsequent development of flawed task force plans.

Dueler Six pulled out the soggy cigar out of his mouth, bit the end off, and returned it to its normal resting place in the corner of his mouth. As he glanced out over the desert from his vantage point the A&L net came to life as the task force S4 reappeared. The S4 was "announcing" to the XO that he had just returned from the field trains and had the emergency resupply of fuel and ammunition with him. His eyes returned to his notepad and the entry, echelon combat service support assets was made under the section set aside for the S4.

The task force S4 was a spirited young armor officer who had been the task force logistics officer for the past nine months. The S4; logistics officer, is responsible for "all

battalion logistical activities. He supervises all organic and non-organic logistical elements supporting the battalion/task force. The S4 plans, coordinates, and supervises the logistical effort for the battalion/task force.”⁶⁰

With that simple radio transmission Dueler Six understood one of the reasons why the combat trains command post (CTCP) had been unable to conduct the emergency resupply in a timely manner. The task force S4 did not understand the concept of positioning combat service support assets on the battlefield. The concept of positioning combat service support assets throughout the task force area of operations is critical to the success of the mission. By failing to plan and prepare for the echelonment of task force logistics assets throughout the battlefield, the S4 hinders or prevents the task force from conducting timely combat service support activities and thereby degrades the overall combat power of the task force.

As Dueler Six continued to monitor the his radios he continued to hear a sense of confusion on the task force A&L net. He glanced out in the direction of the combat trains command post and noticed a “gaggle of combat and recovery vehicles moving in seemingly random patterns over the same piece of ground. The task force maintenance officer was attempting to restore some semblance of order to the unit maintenance collection point. He quickly jotted down two notes for the maintenance officer; task organize maintenance platoon assets and improve maintenance collection point operations.

The task force maintenance officer was a youthful, eager first lieutenant who had been the task force maintenance officer since completing his duties as the Delta Company executive officer about ten months earlier. The Battalion maintenance officer (BMO) is responsible for “planning, coordinating, and supervising the maintenance and recovery efforts of the maintenance platoon and ensures adequate maintenance support is provided to the entire task force.”⁶¹ Dueler Six attributed the confusion on the ground to two

primary factors; their failure to task organize the assets of the maintenance platoon to support the task force operation and the failure of the task force maintenance officer to organize and control operations in the unit maintenance collection point. Dueler Six knew that unit maintenance collection point (UMCP) operations were critical to the long term success of the task force. UMCP operations are critical to continuing task force operations because it was the first point to which task force maintenance teams recovered battle damaged equipment and at which some direct support maintenance is performed.⁶² Without combat fighting vehicles, his heavy task force was simply a collection of men in the desert.

Dueler Six spit the now completely soggy cigar out of his mouth and on to the desert floor. Remembering the plight of the endangered desert tortoise he reached down, retrieved the remnants of his cigar and stuffed it into his pocket. He then began to consider ways to correct the shortcomings he had captured on his notepad.

“Members of the battle staff are responsible for performing all functions needed to provide direction to the unit and to maintain unit activities at high levels of effectiveness.”⁶³ Dueler Six realized that there was not one simple solution to correcting the deficiencies he had noted. He also realized he needed both short and long term solutions. For both sets of solutions he decided to use combinations of the principles of training found in the Army’s doctrinal training manuals and Senge’s disciplines of the learning organization. While Dueler Six was confident that the established set of training principles would enable to craft solutions, he also believed that Senge’s disciplines of learning organizations provided a complimentary set of ideas to work with.

The short term solutions were critical because planning for the next operation was already under way. He decided to use one of the principles of training from *Training The Force*; use appropriate doctrine and one of Senge's disciplines of a learning organization; systems thinking, for his short term solutions.

By emphasizing the training principle of use appropriate doctrine, Dueler Six is emphasizing the basic doctrinal tasks required of his staff officers. By returning to the underlying doctrine and standard operating methods he was reinforcing their previous training and preparing them to make the rapid adjustments necessary for success on the modern battlefield. The cementing discipline of systems thinking would also be useful in helping his individual staff officers understand that they are part of two interconnected sub-systems inside the task force. First, they are the leaders of their individual coordinating staff sections and second, they are critical members of the task force team. On the modern battlefield you either succeed as a team to perish as an individual.

For long term solutions, Dueler Six decided to emphasize three of the principles of training from; use performance oriented training, train to sustain proficiency, and train to challenge and one of Senge's disciplines; personal mastery, as the starting point for correcting these noted deficiencies.

These three principles of training provide a interconnected approach to solving these noted weaknesses. Performance oriented training empowers the trainer to use hand-on training to develop and sustain proficiency in their required basic skills. It is a flexible training principle in that it enables the trainer to increase the level of difficulty as proficiency improves. Training to sustain proficiency enables soldiers and units who have

trained to an established standard to maintain their proficiency by repeating critical tasks training at the minimum frequency necessary for sustainment. While the principle of training to challenge builds competence and confidence by developing new skills, instills loyalty and dedication, and inspires excellence by fostering initiative. The concept of personal mastery is a complementary idea to the three principles of training mentioned. Personal mastery involves learning to expand our personal capacity to create the results we most desire, and creating an organizational environment which encourages all its members to develop themselves towards the goals and purposes they choose. By emphasizing the concept of personal mastery Dueler Six believed he could instill in his individual task force coordinating staff officers the desire to focus on their individual roles and responsibilities. This simple concept has the potential to reinforce their basic military training and enhance their overall professional development and competence.

VI. TASK FORCE BATTLE STAFF SECTIONS

Teamwork: activities performed by team members in such a manner that each activity is coordinated with every other one and contributes to the superordinate goals of the unit or supports the activities of other members.⁶⁴

Battle Staff Integration

As the sun began its uninterrupted decent into the desert floor, the task force once again began to resemble a unit. The individual company/teams were beginning to occupy assembly areas to the east of the WHALE. The ambulances from the medical platoon were moving between the destroyed and damaged vehicles and the battalion aid station. The evening logistics package had just arrived at the logistics release point. As Dueler Six continued to observe the reorganization activities of his task force, his thoughts turned from the actions of his individual staff officers to the activities of their sections. He quietly reflected back on the composition and qualifications of his task force staff sections. On paper, he had a well trained and educated staff consisting of experienced commissioned and noncommissioned officers. Collectively, they had been together for almost nine months prior to this rotation to the NTC.

The proficiency of the task force staff sections is the second of these three related areas. The role of the task force staff is to "assist the commander in doing all the things necessary to coordinate the battle and to ensure adequate combat and combat service support to allow for continuous operations."⁶⁵

As Dueler Six watched the frenzied activity on the desert floor and listened to the radio calls on the task force administrative/logistics (A&L) net, he began to realize that the number of casualties the task force had sustained was climbing.

One of the trends that was becoming clear to Dueler Six was that the task force staff sections had demonstrated inadequate understanding and competence in their doctrinal tasks. One common trend he jotted down on his notepad was that his coordinating staff officers had performed many of the tasks required of their respective staff section because they have failed to train the members of their staff section. Next to this entry he added; I am my position and the illusion of taking charge.

As he once again reflected back on their initial planning process he began to "see" the indications of the lack of teamwork and the centralization of task accomplishment in each of the task force task sections. Recalling his brief visit to the combat trains command post, Dueler Six again noted the lack of teamwork and the centralization of task accomplishment in the combat service support arena.

The S1 section was his most recently formed team. The Adjutant had arrived in the task force almost nine months earlier after graduating from the armor officer advance course. Both the personnel and administration center supervisor and the personnel staff noncommissioned officer were career soldiers in the personnel services field. This staff section was fully manned with an energetic staff of young soldiers. The S1 section is responsible for personnel services and the general administration of the task force. The S1 section has personnel at both the CTCF and the field trains. In the combat trains their

primary responsibility are strength accountability and casualty reporting as well as command post functions. In the field trains they are responsible for replacement operations, administrative services, personnel actions, legal services, and finance services.⁶⁶

Dueler Six noted that only the S1 was capable of planning and executing casualty evacuation. While his subordinates were well trained in their individual skills and the flow of casualty reports was smooth, the other members of the S1 section were unable to plan for future operations and were unable to provide input for adjusting the casualty evacuation plan based on actual battlefield conditions. This fact relegates half of the CTCP to merely operating a logistics communications node and severely hinders the ability of the task force to reconstitute.

The S2 section was the second most experienced staff section in the task force. The S2 had joined the team more than a year ago after serving as the assistant brigade S2 for almost fourteen months. His senior noncommissioned officer had graduated from the battle staff noncommissioned officers course at Fort Sam Houston and was a dynamic leader. The rest of the section was well trained and fully manned. Dueler Six's impression of the S2 section was that they were well trained and operated effectively as a team. The S2 section is responsible for combat intelligence. They coordinate input from other staff sections, collect and provide current information of tactical value concerning terrain, weather, and enemy forces. They also prepare and update the intelligence preparation of the battlefield products and monitor the reconnaissance and surveillance plans in conjunction with the S3 section. The S2 section provides staff supervision over

supporting intelligence organizations in support of commander's intelligence requirements.⁶⁷

He noted that the task force S2 decided to perform most of the routine and mundane tasks himself. The rest of his section was little more than a message center. Dueler Six noted that no one other than the S2 understood the intelligence preparation of the battlefield process. The rest of his section was unfamiliar with how to develop the various products required to support the overall task force effort or why they were important. For Dueler Six, this failure to understand the intelligence preparation of the battlefield process and its critical nature to the overall task force decision making process highlighted the fact that the intelligence staff section was improperly trained and lacked proficiency as a team.

Dueler Six made two specific notations regarding the S2 staff section. The first was the apparent fact that no one other than the S2 was capable of performing threat analysis. Threat analysis is the cornerstone of intelligence analysis at the task force level. It is the basis used for determining possible enemy courses of action and identifying enemy strengths and weaknesses. Enemy course of action models drive the remainder of the decision making process. Since this phase of the decision making process is the foundation of the entire process then having only one soldier trained to perform this critical task is shortsighted. The second notation he made was that apparently the only member of the S2 staff section trained to develop situation templates or to collaborate on the production of event templates and matrices was the S2. Again,

given the critical nature of these processes and products it is self defeating to have only one member of a staff section trained to develop and produce these products.

The operations section was the most experienced staff section within the task force. The S3 was a graduate of the Army's Command and General Staff College and had joined the task force ten months earlier. The operations sergeant major was an experienced tanker and a recent graduate of the battle staff noncommissioned officers course. The S3 Air had joined the task force about nine months earlier along with the S1 and the S4. The chemical officer was a recent graduate of the chemical officer basic course and was teamed up with an experienced chemical corps noncommissioned officer. Dueler Six felt that the S3 section would be a key to their success at the NTC and that they were capable of meeting the challenge. The operations section is responsible for the planning, organization, employment, and operations of the task force. They monitor the battle, ensure the necessary combat support assets are available when and where required and maintain the routine reporting and communication functions of the task force.⁶⁸ Dueler Six remembered that the S3 and S3 Air almost exclusively conducting the mission analysis process. They not only wasted valuable time, but also ignored the input of the other members of the operations section staff members. While this saved time, it also resulted in an incomplete mission analysis of their area of responsibility. A second trend he noted was that the same two individuals frequently completed the development of the task force operations order without any substantial assistance from the remainder of the operations section staff. While this undoubtedly saves a small amount of time it also

means that only a few members of the operations section staff are familiar with how the task force plan was developed.

The S4 was the third member of the task force staff to graduate from the armor officer advance course nine months earlier. The S4's senior noncommissioned officer was an experienced supply sergeant who had previously served as the S4 in the task force. Dueler Six believed that his logistics section was well trained and the S4 was supported by an effective crew in the S4 shop. The S4 section is responsible for supply, transportation, and field service functions. It coordinates requisition and distribution of supplies to company supply sections and turns in captured supplies and equipment. The S4 section has personnel at both the combat trains and field trains command posts.⁶⁹

Dueler Six also noted the inability of the S4 personnel to prepare or update logistics estimates, and they were also unable to adjust the combat service support plan to existing battlefield conditions. This lack of training was directly responsible for their inability to resupply Team Alpha and Team Charlie during their first engagement. Combined with the inability of the S1 section to operate in a proactive manner, the CTCF effectively became a logistics communications node whenever the S1 and S4 were both away from their command post. This combination of training failures severely degrades the combat capability of the entire task force.

The task force maintenance platoon was led by a young, energetic first lieutenant who had recently completed fourteen months as the Delta Company executive officer. The battalion motor sergeant was a grizzled veteran of numerous motor pools, and the task force was fortunate to have the services of an experienced maintenance technician.

Dueler Six regarded the maintenance platoon as one of the best he had ever seen. The task force maintenance platoon performs unit maintenance and battle damage assessment and repair on most task force equipment. This platoon is organized into four sections to provide maintenance support to the entire task force. The administration section maintains Class IX repair parts and the Army Maintenance Management Systems (TAMMS) records, the recovery support section that provides limited welding, metalworking, and backup recovery support to the company maintenance teams, the maintenance services section provides maintenance support to the rear elements of the task force and backup support to the company maintenance teams, and the company maintenance teams who provide maintenance support to the maneuver company/teams.⁷⁰

During his observations of the UMCP, Dueler Six noticed one significant positive and one disturbing negative trend. On the positive side, the UMCP was quickly and effectively repairing battle damaged combat systems and maintenance failures. Unfortunately, the battalion motor sergeant was unable to plan and prepare for current or future operations when the BMO was absent from the UMCP. While the battalion motor sergeant did run an effective repair and maintenance operation it was solely focused on repairing the vehicles on hand.

Dueler Six began to fish around in his pockets for a piece of gum. The cigar had left its usual unpleasant taste in his mouth. After a futile attempt to locate a piece of gum he began to consider ways to improve team cohesion and burden sharing inside the task force staff sections.

“Team performance skills are those skills needed to execute activities that are performed in response to the actions of the other members of the team or that guide other members of the team.”⁷¹ Dueler Six realized that while there were numerous possible

approaches available to solving these problems, he also recognized the need for both simple short and long term solutions. Again, short term solutions were critical because planning for the next operation was already under way. He decided to use one of the principles of training from FM 25-100 and FM 25-101 and one of Senge's disciplines for his short term solutions.

The training principle of "use appropriate doctrine" surfaced again. By using appropriate doctrine the staff sections would be able to establish a base knowledge to use for their training and upcoming operations. This principle enables the staff sections to develop and conduct training against known standards and thereby improve the overall development and proficiency of the staff section. Senge's discipline of shared vision struck a familiar cord with Dueler Six. By "building a sense of commitment in the group, by developing shared visions of the future we seek to create, and the principles and guiding practices by which we hope to get there"⁷² the task force staff officers could enhance the proficiency of their sections by tying their individual actions to the success of the entire section.

He jotted down three additional principles of training and two more of Senge's disciplines for incorporation into his long term plan for reversing these training deficiencies. The training principles of use performance oriented training, train to sustain proficiency, and train to challenge provide a starting point for correcting these systemic negative trends. Performance oriented training, training to challenge, and training to sustain proficiency are not only powerful training tools, but are the cornerstones of effective training programs. These three principles of training would enable the members

of the staff section to see tangible results of their training and thereby sustain and improve their proficiency and self-confidence.

Senge's principles of team learning and systems thinking provided another approach to solving these identified shortcomings. By emphasizing the concept of team learning the coordinating staff section officer can enhance the performance of his section and provide an azimuth to why and where their actions are headed. The principle of team learning "is the process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members desire."⁷³ By developing and nurturing this concept the staff officer and his section are tapping their potential to become a team and truly contribute to the overall task force effort. The discipline of systems thinking was another useful concept for improving the effectiveness and proficiency of the coordinating staff sections. By demonstrating how and why their particular staff section is an integral part of the entire task force team, the coordinating staff officers can leverage this importance to enhance the overall training level and focus of his staff section.

VII. TASK FORCE STAFF SYNCHRONIZATION

To be effective, a battle staff must perform as a unified social system which executes competently all of the organizational functions (processes) needed to enable a combat unit to adapt and to cope with every condition presented it by the battlefield environments.⁷⁴

Battle Staff Integration

Dueler Six watched the small dust cloud moving towards him from the west. As he aimed his binoculars at the dust cloud he quickly recognized the box-like outline of the M577 command and control vehicles comprising his tactical operations center. As Dueler Six watched his main command post come to a stop and begin to deploy he began to consider why his task force attack had resembled a series of unsupported platoon actions and disjointed company/team maneuvers.

The ability of the task force executive officer to synchronize the various activities of the coordinating and special staff sections is the third of these three related areas. His role is as “the principal assistant to the battalion commander, he is the task force chief of staff, is the principal integrator of combat service support in support of maneuver. During the battle, he is normally in the main command post where he monitors the battle, reports to higher headquarters, keeps abreast of the situation at higher headquarters and units on the flanks, integrates combat support and combat service support into the overall plan, and plans for future operations.”⁷⁵

Dueler Six began to realize that he had failed to ensure that the entire task force fight was synchronized. The failure of the task force to coordinate the actions of the entire task force fight had exponentially compounded the two previous shortcomings in his staff. Synchronization is the “ability to focus resources and activities in time and space to produce maximum relative combat power at the decisive point.”⁷⁶ Without a synchronized operation the task force fight had become a series of unrelated company/team and platoon actions that resulted in the piecemeal destruction of his entire task force. “Battle staff integration is the force which melds together the roles, attitudes, and activities of members, and is manifested by the integration of group structure and function, and hence , by unit integrity.”⁷⁷

He realized that the third major contributing factor to their recent defeat was an overall poor level of staff integration. As he reflected back on the on the initial planning and preparation phase for this deliberate attack he noted several disturbing trends. First, they had failed to integrate all task force coordinating and special staff officers in to the

mission analysis process. Second, poor course of action development procedures led to the omission of critical combat support and combat service assets from the plan. Third, their faulty war-gaming procedures had led to the selection of sub-optimal courses of action, and eventually to the development of a poor task force plan. Finally, their uncoordinated reconnaissance and surveillance operation led to the early destruction of the task force scout platoon and their inability to locate the defending Krasnovian motorized rifle company.

Task Force Cowboy's incomplete mission analysis had set the tone for their eventual defeat. They had initially failed to integrate all of the combat support and combat service support staff officers into the process. The task force S3 had opted to perform the majority of the mission analysis himself. While this undoubtedly saved a great deal of time it also undoubtedly omitted a great deal of pertinent information. This failure to include all members of the task force staff into mission analysis ran the risk of not including all assets available into their initial analysis and they in fact missed important pieces of information that was available. This included the likely use of chemical weapons by the Krasnovians, the location of the complex obstacle system, and the location of defending Krasnovian platoons.

Task Force Cowboy had also failed to develop adequate courses of action. They had in fact developed their courses of action without integrating all of the combat, combat support, and combat service support assets available. This basic staff failure to include all of the resources provided to the task force in the development of potential courses of

action led to the development of incomplete courses of actions and helped set the stage for their defeat.

Task Force Cowboy's faulty war-gaming procedures were simply a continuation of the lack of task force synchronization during the planning phase. Their three most glaring errors were; the failure of the S2 to portray an uncooperative enemy, the failure to integrate the engineer company commander into the war-gaming sessions, and the failure to plan for the use of the task force decontamination platoon. Compounding these errors of omission was the fact that when they were finally discovered they attempted to "force" them into the war-gaming session. This end result was an abortive attempt at war-gaming and eventually the development of a poorly synchronized task force plan.

The task force's uncoordinated task force reconnaissance effort was another example of the negative cascading effect of poor synchronization. In an effort to win the "reconnaissance battle" the S2 and the scout platoon leader developed the initial reconnaissance and surveillance effort. Unfortunately, they failed to properly plan or coordinate this action with the entire task force staff. While the S2 believed he and the scout platoon leader were developing a concept for their reconnaissance effort, the scout platoon leader believed the S2 had approved and fully coordinated the plan. Without further confirmation from the task force tactical operations center, the scout platoon initiated the area reconnaissance. While the initial moments of the reconnaissance were successful the failure to coordinate for support became apparent as he found a complex obstacle system. Without supporting indirect fires the scout platoon was unable to counter

OPFOR reconnaissance and without combat service support assets they were unable to evacuate casualties and sustain their operation.

As Dueler Six looked up from his notepad he saw a small dust cloud far off to the east. He knew that neither he nor the neighboring infantry task force had elements that far east. Could Krasnovian reconnaissance units be headed their way? After a short radio transmission to the task force command post he began to search for solutions to the problem of task force synchronization.

Dueler Six jotted down the training principles of; train as a combined arms and services team and train as you fight as starting point for correcting this deficiency. By developing training plans to include all habitual members of the task force team the task force is training for success. This principle not only ensures that all routinely available task force assets are available during training exercises, but it also reinforces the necessary team work and synchronization skills required to successfully fight a task force on the modern battlefield. The second training principle "train as you fight" is the cornerstone of all training. By replicating battlefield conditions during training events units strive to achieve tactically oriented training designed to stress the entire team. Successful training events not only achieve the training objectives, but also challenge every member of the task force team. While simulated training cannot replace real combat conditions, it can provide a "more stressful" environment and thereby reinforce the individual and collective skills of the entire task force.

He also believed that Senge's principles of team learning, mental models, and systems thinking provided a reinforcing approach to correcting the task force difficulties with synchronization. The discipline of team learning "is the process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members desire."⁷⁸ By

developing and nurturing this concept the executive officer can tap the potential of each of the coordinating and special staff sections and improve the effectiveness of the entire task force. Mental models enable the individual staff members, staff sections, and the entire task force staff to understand how their staff system actually operates. By understanding the process of mental modeling the task force staff can begin to use mental models as accelerators to learning instead of letting them inhibit learning. The discipline of systems thinking is another useful concept for improving the effectiveness of the coordinating staff sections. By demonstrating how and why overall staff integration and synchronization is a critical component of task force success, the entire task force team will be working towards a common "shared vision" and thereby improve the effectiveness of the entire task force.

Dueler Six watched the sun complete its slow decent into the desert floor. The task force tactical operations center had finally completed its move forward and had begun to establish itself at the foot of observation post one. The company/teams comprising his task force were also completing the process of relocating and establishing defensive positions in anticipation of their upcoming defensive mission. As Dueler Six walked down off the WHALE towards his HMMWV, his driver handed him a tepid cup of coffee. He slid into the passenger seat and signaled his driver that it was time to depart for the after action review with the brigade commander.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

"It is the responsibility of the battle staff to develop effective plans based upon the best information available about; the mission, the opposing force, available resources, and the physical environment. It is a further responsibility to oversee implementation of the plans and adapt their ongoing implementation to changing battlefield conditions."⁷⁹

Battle Staff Integration

The purpose of this monograph was to examine ways to enhance the training and development of the task force staff. As a result of this research, several conclusions may

be drawn. First, throughout the development of this monograph one theme remained constant, that while systemic negative trends exist in the three related areas that form the basis of this study, none of the solutions for these trends is beyond the scope of our current training doctrine. The overarching training philosophy in FM 25-100 and FM 25-101 provide a solid base for enhancing the training of the task force staff. Specifically, the principles of training contained in both manuals provides a strong foundation for improving the identified systemic negative trends. Second, in *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge's concept of the learning organization deals primarily with business related examples of these same individual and organizational trends. Many of his proposed solutions form the foundation of current U.S. Army leadership and training doctrine.

The study of *Battle Staff Integration* by J.A. Olmstead identified these same systemic trends as being endemic to all military style organizational structures. While the RAND study on *Battalion Level Command and Control at the National Training Center* focused primarily on command and control issues, it also addressed the area of task force synchronization. Both of these studies also propose solutions currently found in our current leadership and training doctrine.

The bottom line is that to enhance the professional development and training of the task force coordinating staff we should continue to use our existing training doctrine. The principles of training provide a solid foundation for developing and executing a training program that will lead to the development of an effective task force staff. It is also a powerful tool for enhancing the training of task force staffs whatever their current level of individual, staff section, and overall team proficiency. The concept of the

learning organization can be powerful tool useful for sculpting the future of the task force. The five learning disciplines can be used to enhance the professional development and training of the task force staff in all three related areas. While their underlying concepts are found in current U.S. Army training doctrine, they also provide a different “spin” on the application of these disciplines to training. By understanding the seven learning disabilities the leadership of the task force is able to either avoid or minimize their destructive impact on the overall operation of the task force.

. . . as he focused back in on the problem at hand, his thoughts were interrupted by a small commotion at the entrance to his tactical operations center. Dueler Six looked away from the map and at the stranger approaching the operations map. Dueler Six, I'm LTC Tom Cavalry, Cobra 06, I'll be your shadow for the next couple of weeks. Oh, and by the way, welcome to Fort Irwin Military City.

ENDNOTES

¹U.S. Army Field Manual 25-101, *Training The Force, Battle Focused Training* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1990), i.

²The opening vignette and its continuation pieces were developed by the author. The base information was developed during the analysis of NTC THP's and additional details were added by the author. This monograph uses a modified version of the military classic "The Defence of Duffer's Drift." The basis for this developing vignette is the contemplation's of the commander of Task Force Cowboy at the conclusion of his first force-on-force mission. In an effort to understand why his unit suffered defeat, Dueler Six is reflecting back on the events of the past two days. His thoughts revolve around the three interrelated areas that form the basis for this monograph.

³Jon Grossman, *Battalion - Level Command and Control at the National Training Center* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1994), xii.

⁴Joseph A. Olmstead, *Battle Staff Integration* (Alexandria, VA.: Institute for Defense Analysis, 1992), IV-10, IDA Paper P 2560.

⁵ *Ibid.*, II-5 and II-6.

⁶Grossman, xii.

⁷National Training Center Take Home Package (Fort Irwin, CA: NTC, 1997). One of the preconditions to accessing THP information from the CALL database is that units and rotation number numbers can not be disclosed. This is critical to preserve the open, learning environment that exists at the training centers.

⁸ The author made this assessment. My criteria for this was to examine the comments of the observer/controllers on a specific coordinating staff officer responsibility. If there were more negative than positive comments the overall assessment was determined to be negative.

⁹ The author made this assessment. My criteria for this was to examine the comments of the observer/controllers covering each coordinating staff section. If there were more negative than positive comments the overall assessment was determined to be negative.

¹⁰ The author made this assessment. My criteria for this was to examine the comments of the observer/controllers covering the command and control battlefield operating system. If there were more negative than positive comments the overall assessment was determined to be negative.

¹¹NTC Priority Trends, *A Compendium of Trends, with Techniques and Procedures that Work!* (Center for Army Lessons Learned, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1996), N56.

¹²U.S. Army Field Manual 71-2 *The Tank and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1988), 1-8.

¹³NTC Priority Trends, N3 - N5.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, N40 - N43.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, N26 - N29.

¹⁶U.S. Army Field Manual 71-2 *The Tank and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force*, 1-8.

¹⁷ NTC Priority Trends, N 53 - N54.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, N40 - N43.

¹⁹ U.S. Army Field Manual 71-2 *The Tank and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force*, 1-6.

²⁰ U.S. Army Field Manual 25-100, *Training The Force*, (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1988), ii.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1-1.

²²Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 4.

²³*Ibid.*, 3.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 6.

²⁵Charlotte Roberts and others, eds., *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 6.

²⁶Senge, 148.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 146.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 211.

²⁹Roberts, 12.

³⁰Senge, 208.

³¹Roberts, 6.

³²Senge, 174-176.

³³Ibid., 10.

³⁴Ibid., 236.

³⁵Ibid., 68.

³⁶Roberts, 6.

³⁷Senge, 12.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., 18.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., 19.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., 20.

⁴⁵Ibid., 21.

⁴⁶Ibid., 22.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., 23.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Olmstead, S-2.

⁵²U.S. Army Field Manual 101-5 Staff Organization and Operations (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1997), 4-9.

⁵³U.S. Army Field Manual 71-2 *The Tank and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force*, 2-4.

⁵⁴Ibid., 7-4.

⁵⁵Ibid., 7-3.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid., 2-4.

⁵⁸CTC Trends, National Training Center (NTC) 1QFY97 & 2QFY97(Center for Army Lessons Learned, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1996), 6.

⁵⁹U.S. Army Field Manual 71-2 *The Tank and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force*, 2-4.

⁶⁰Ibid., 2-5.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid., 7-28.

⁶³Olmstead, II-1.

⁶⁴Ibid., IV-4.

⁶⁵U.S. Army Field Manual 71-2 *The Tank and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force*, 1-8.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., 2-9.

⁶⁸Ibid., 2-4.

⁶⁹Ibid., 7-5.

⁷⁰Ibid., 7-6.

⁷¹Olmstead, IV-11.

⁷²Roberts, 6.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Olmstead, IV-4.

⁷⁵U.S. Army Field Manual 71-2 *The Tank and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force*, 2-3.

⁷⁶U.S. Army Field Manual 1005-5 *Operations* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1990), Glossary 16.

⁷⁷ Olmstead, IV-5.

⁷⁸ Senge, 237.

⁷⁹Ibid., II-5.

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